

**Nuestra, LLC - Somerville - Community Outreach Meeting
Q&As and Responses**

Questions: (41:58)

- **Why can't we see who else from the community is participating in the meeting?**
 - o Attendees cannot see; prior to covid, meetings were held in person at a community venue but now are required to be held via Zoom, so there are some limitations to that, so we are stuck with that.
- **How many people are present?**
 - o 7 attendees.
- **While the proposed location is not within 300 feet of a k-12 school, its essentially next to one of the largest children's parks in Somerville, that is Conway Park. How would this operation benefit the immediate neighborhood?**
 - o We'll do a great job at securing this site and the surrounding site, but we don't have control over what people do when they leave the facility. But when they are nearby, we do take caution and try to monitor the facility to make sure people aren't using. We also take great care in trying to meet your feedback with what's going on, so we can understand if there are problems that you're seeing, for example, in a park. We will do what we have to even if it involves a police detail to try to do something about it, we'll take that action. We also would love to hear feedback of what are the causes that may be worthy of supporting in the neighborhood. If there are problems or kids having drug issues and you think there's a cause we could donate to we'd love to hear that as well. The intent of the people running this with their community engagement experience, is to make sure we can contribute to that in a positive way.
- **Will this project be part of the existing Chinese restaurant?**
 - o No, it will replace that restaurant.
- **Why were local community organizations and churches not invited to this meeting?**
 - o The community outreach meeting is a creature of state regulation. They say here is what you have to do for that meeting with a list of people that have to be notified. They ask us to notify abutters within 300 feet, they ask us to notify the various certain city officials, and we have to publish a notice in a newspaper as well, so we're just doing what we're bound to do by state law. If, however, you're aware of other institutions, whether it's houses of worship, schools, whoever, that want to be heard, we would welcome speaking to them. We would invite you to get in touch with us. Happy to spend some time, happy to do the entire presentation we just did, happy to do that for them as well and let them understand what's going on and have their concerns addressed as well.
- **How many public meetings are you required to have, and will you commit to having another one when more people are available or when in person is possible? There are many people in this area who do not have computer access or zoom.**
 - o We're actually in conversation with a couple of city councilors to make sure that everyone in the community is part of this process. This is just the first of many, many meetings I know we're going to talk to JT at the end of this week and make sure that there are other as well as this one so that everyone is abreast of the

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situation. There are two public processes that are going to happen where you're welcome obviously to give your input. One is at the what's called the special permit process before the Somerville planning board and the other one is a licensing process. There's a license Commission. And the public is welcome to put their input in during those public proceedings as well.

- **The MCA provided a high score for community engagement even though you have no direct ties to Somerville. Instead, they indicate that they believe you will establish those ties. What made them come to that conclusion?**
 - o The people you met, Ivelisse and Renata, this is really what they've done all their lives. They have been a part of organizations that reach out and try to influence the community. There's a lot of people quite frankly in Massachusetts that sort of pay lip service to that they go out and they try to find people that sort of fit a certain criteria, whether ethnic background or something of that nature and it really doesn't ring true. I think what rang true here is that Ivelisse and Renata in particular just have a lot of experience actually engaging with the community and I'm sure that that played a big role in why they made that determination.
- **The MCA report states the team did not express clear connection to the Somerville community. Why did Ms. Rivera and Ms. Caines choose Somerville and this specific ward?**
 - o [Ivelisse and Renata] - We are Boston natives and back in 2018 when we applied to the city of Somerville, Somerville had a very beautifully mapped out process as to how to apply to become marijuana establishment. There were actual green zones where marijuana establishments could be, and we thought that they had the most equitable application process in all of Massachusetts. We felt that in all of these 351 cities in Massachusetts, we've had the best shot in Somerville in terms of being in a place that was going to be welcoming, also kind of like minded and civically engaged as we are.
- **Why this ward?**
 - o It's difficult to find good locations to operate these types of businesses because not every landlord wants to rent to a company like this in this industry and a lot of them are within buffer zones, so you look around and determine what is a place where this is a viable business and can fit into the community. We determined that this a great place to operate this type of business. A lot of this is business related and but also on the community engagement side we do think it's a really good location.
- **Your score was higher than Somerville Natives and you're 49% owned by Hollywood actor. We think that's hilarious.**
 - o He is a Boston native, and he loves Boston. He definitely has utter respect for the community, as his father was a professor at UMass Boston. He has deep roots in the community, so that makes a difference. He's also a businessman and a successful businessman at that. It's a little bit misleading to say you know "oh he's

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an actor”. Actually, he's got a lot of business experience and I think that's why this appealed to him.

- **Where are people going to park?**

- Right now, you have a restaurant operating at that location. The peak hour for a restaurant is probably six o'clock, seven o'clock at night and I'm guessing it's Thursday night Friday night probably Saturday night as well. Your peak restaurant hour will see more customers at it than this facility will at its peak hour. I get parking is an issue; all I will tell you is you'll probably have less customers here at peak hour than you presently have for the restaurant. Obviously, we hope you know that public transportation will help. The biggest thing that we do to assist in that regard is we move customers in and out of this facility very quickly. The average time in Massachusetts at a marijuana dispensary for customers about 8 to 10 minutes, so people are in people are out.

- **What engagement, if any, have you had with Somerville Ward 2 city Councilor, JT Scott?**

- Bottom line is if he has concerns, we want to sit down and talk with him and we let him know. I know he wanted to have us do this presentation for him in the near future which we're happy to do. We fully intend to engage the Councilor and quite frankly, take all of his concerns and suggestions into full account to try to make this because he has a lot of knowledge about this area that could be very beneficial to us. [Ivelisse and Renata] - I actually had a very good conversation yesterday and he thought he said he wasn't going to be able to make this meeting, but we are scheduled to have a presentation for him more in depth and virtually. He's going to work alongside with us.

- **A 200-room hotel is being completed this year right across from the proposed location. How is that factored into the planning?**

- To the extent that those people might be customers, they will have parking associated with that hotel. To be at our peak hour, we're going to be better than the present use, which is a restaurant, so we understand this is a popular area. People like this area and it'll be a busy store, but we think we can handle whatever rush is there by moving our customers in and out.

- **That's the largest hotel in Somerville and they've become aware of your plan today. They're not pleased.**

- We're happy to talk to them about what we are trying to accomplish and how safe and secure these businesses are. They will not be the first hotel in the country that has had a marijuana business open up near them. I can assure you that businesses operate very successfully in those areas, very safely and securely, and I look forward to engaging the folks from the hotel to talk about it.